A Brief Life Sketch

S. Nauhria Singh Kalsi,

Founder of :-

Kalsi Mechanical Works,

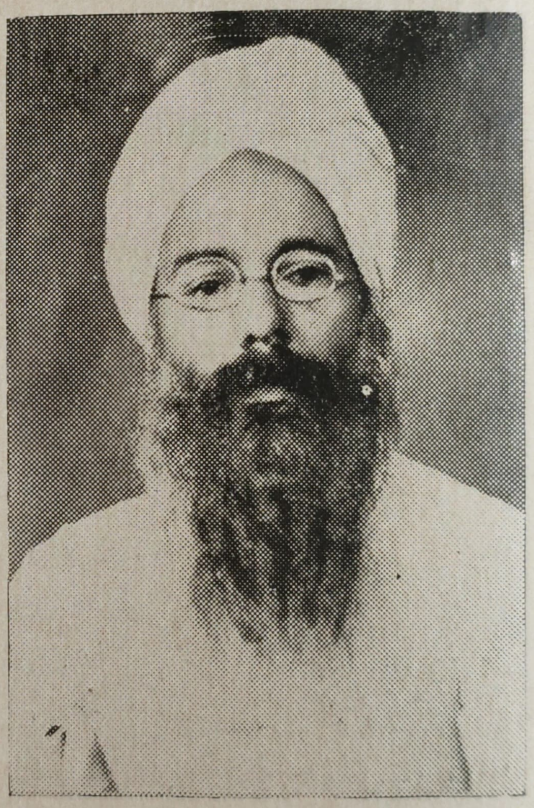
NANDPUR (Ludhiana)

The grand old man S. Nauhria Singh Kalsi who had had but little schooling in his younger days and cannot even now boast of any literacy beyond scribbling his own name in the native script is the man who laid the foundation of Kalsi Mechanical Works Nandpur, District Ludhiana, in 1912, a firm renowned for the manufacture of knitting machines. He was then quite a young man, as already said, without any

schooling or experience, but was ambitious and full of promise for the future. He was till the age of 18 years working with his father making rude agricultural implements or worked as a mason on daily wages of about six annas a day. But this work was not suited to his temperament & he looked for bigger things. He therefore decided to leave his village and a chance acquaintance took him to Chakrauta, when he was barely 18. Here he got a job as a Mistry in the Military Engineering Service and soon became a Head Mistry. After a couple of years service as a Head Mistry he was appointed overseer @ Rs. 45/- p. m. It was after

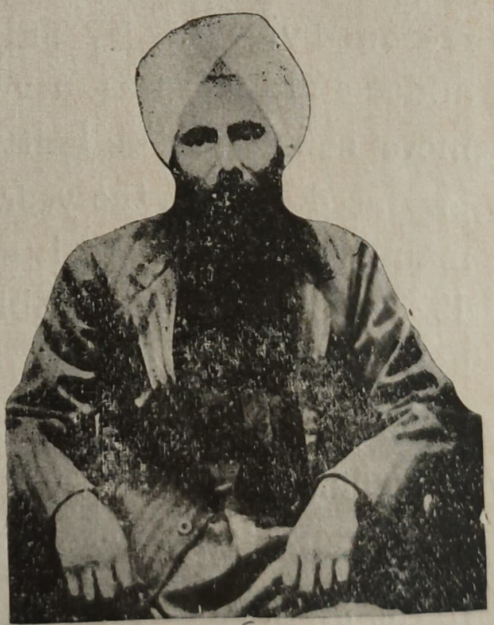
becoming overseer that he realized that there was no further scope of progress for him there and that he would be doomed to be an overseer all his life. He therefore decided to resign his job and return to his village and in 1909 he came back to his village after a stay of about ten years abroad.

Here S. Nauhria Singh Kalsi in company with his younger brother S. Ram Singh took to the work of repairs to sewing machines. The dexterity of the two brothers soon won for them a name in the locality and they had a roaring business. Hardly two, three years had passed when the great war of 1914-18 broke out. Ludhiana had by then already made a name as the, 'Manchester of Hosiery' in India. All foreign import was totally stopped and this had an adverse effect on the hosiery manufacturers who urgently required necessary repairs and replacements of the worn-out parts of their machines, specially cylinders and dials. S. Nauhria Singh



Kalsi availed of the opportunity and immediately switched on to the hosiery machines At first he undertook minor repairs work and then by and by set himself whole heartedly to the manufacture of new parts.

In those days there were no schools or workshops where to acquire specialized training. Even the small Machine tools were not easily available. So with much difficulty he managed to make with his own hands a hand driven Miling Machine and a small paddle Lathe and with the help of these tools he at last succeeded in 1916 in making cylinders and dials (the integral parts of a socks machine.) After varied experiments he was in 1920 successful in making a complete hand socks machine which was placed before the public and found in no way wanting.



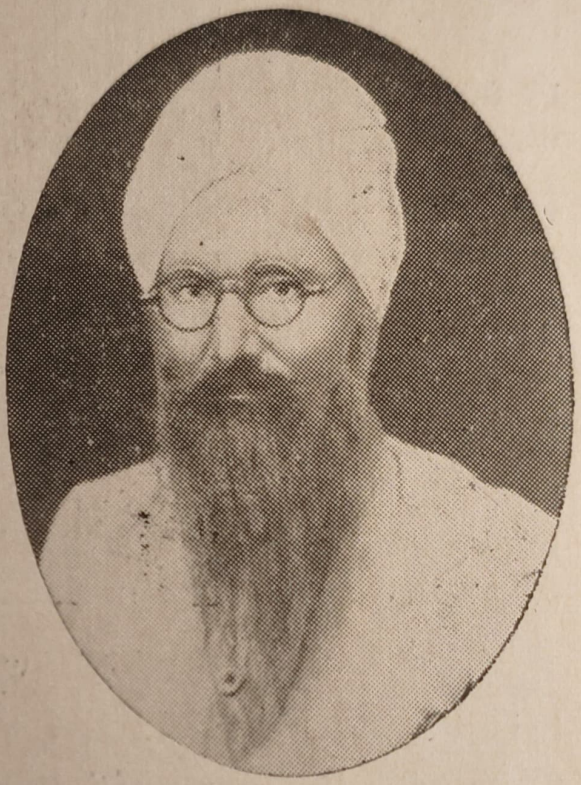
It was in the year 1921 that he applied to The Govt. of India for a patent. The application was advertised in the Govt of India Gazette for entering opposition, if any. This was, however, raised by one Mr. Harrison, a British manufacturer of these

machines in England. A case was filed against S. Nauhria Singh in the Patent Office at Calcutta, for infringement of copy rights. The case went on for a couple of years and luckily it ended in his favour and a patent was granted to him on 16-8-1923 which numbered as 7004 of 1923. Had the patent case been lost, India could ill-aford to have attained to its present height in this industry, and the failure would have proved of fatal cosequences, as the hosiery machine making industry which we see so flourishing today could not have come into existence. Thus S. Nauhria Singh Kalsi can rightly be acclaimed as also the founder of the Hosiery machine manufacturing Industry in India.

The grant of patent provided a sort of impetus and fillip and work was undertaken with re-newed vigour. By and by more machinery was added and there was never a year when one or more new types of knitting machines were not produced. Uptil the year 1928, he was concerned mainly with hand driven machines. The years 1928 to 30 were responsible for the production of half Jacquard machines. These were the machines which blocked the way of Japanese Hosiery Goods in India.

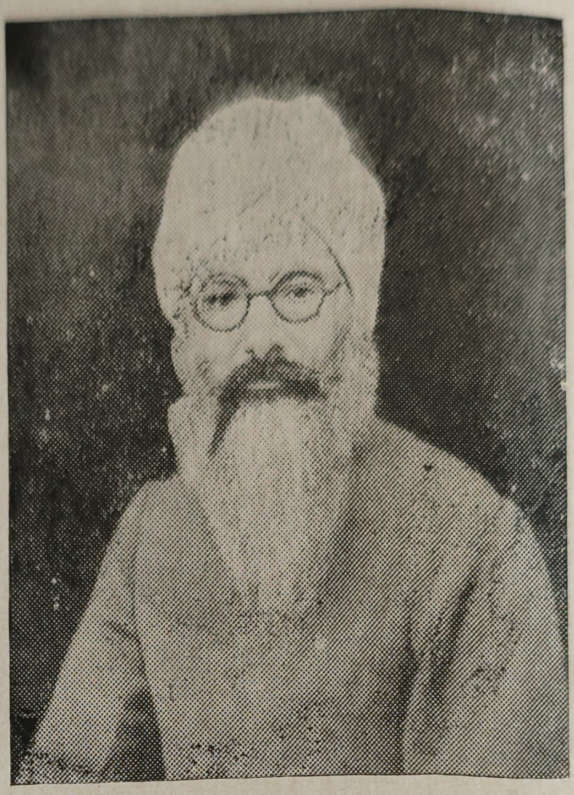
From 1931 onwards he directed his energies to the production of bigger and more completed

power driven machines. After making extensive and expensive experiments, he at last succeeded in putting before the public his well known product, the Rib Jacqaurd Circular Knitting Machine, which set up a new standard and while having all the advantages of foreign machines embodied entirely new and exclusive



features of its own. This machine met with such an universal applause that it altogether threw in the background the hither-to-much coveted British R. L. Q. machine, the import of which was considerably reduced in later years.

After some more years of experiment and research still another type of machine 'Sinker body' with its cylinder of steel inserted walls was produced and like its sister machines, this one



also met with universal applause. Again in 1937–38 two more new types were produced for making mufflers, viz Automatic muffler machines with automatic change of feeders and chain control system.

The year 1944–45 was conspicuous for bringing in the market of yet another type of machine of the most outstanding features. This was The Rib Eyelet machine. The production of this marvellous machine beat all the previous records and it could be beyond any shadow of doubt described as an accomplishment which we all are justly proud of.

These are only a few of the more important types of machines made so far. There is quite a large number of such machines, so large variety of different types that it would be futile on our part to describe all of them in detail.

Beginning from a scratch S. Nauhria Singh Kalsi has risen to be a big industrialist of today. The Kalsi Mechanical Works represent the peak of endeavour in the hosiery machine manufacturing industry. Founded in 1912 the work has gone from success to success until we can proudly say today that our output in the line is next to none whether Indian or foreign. This has been made possible by the ingenuity, perseverance and untiring efforts of its founder S. Nauhria Singh Kalsi who is one of those lucky few who live to see the fruits of their labour.

Advanced in years and with hair turned grey in the service of the industry, this grand old man has aspirations and ideals as high as ever. He longs for the day when this industry will attain to self sufficiency in the matter of latch needles.

A hosiery machine without needles is like a CAR without petrol. The problem of latch needles, the installation in India of a needle manufacturing plant has been of late vexing his troubled mind. It remain to be seen whether he lives long enough to see the problem solved in his life time.

In the end it may be added that most of the hosiery Manufacturing units at Ludhiana owe their existence in one way or the other to the benevolence of S. Nauhria Singh Kalsi, who has been their most honoured benefactor in the line of their choice.

S. Nauhria Singh had, long before any one else, realised that the future of a country depends on her industrial out-put which is the key-stone of the nation's economic structure.

Pal Electric Press, Ludhiana.